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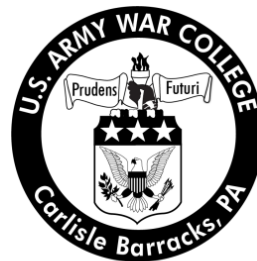# The Whole of Government Approach in West Africa

by

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THE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH IN WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Pursuing a whole of government approach in West Africa within the Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of Defense (DoD) is essential in ensuring US interests and objectives in the region are achieved. This paper addresses the whole of government approach as it relates to integration and coordination of development assistance initiatives, security concerns, and humanitarian relief efforts in West Africa. Additionally, attaining national security objectives requires the efficient and effective use of the diplomatic, informational, economic, and military instruments of national power supported by and coordinated with those of allies and West African regional organizations. In order for the US to achieve a balanced whole of government approach, it must not only collaborate and coordinate internally but it must do the same with its partners. The US must get this right because without a whole of government approach in West Africa its efforts, interests and more importantly influence in the region will decline.

THE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH IN WEST AFRICA

A *whole of government approach* is an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of the United States Government to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal.[1]

Pursuing a whole of government approach in West Africa among the Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of Defense (DoD) is essential in achieving US interests and objectives in the region. The whole of government approach makes development assistance initiatives, security concerns, and humanitarian relief efforts in West Africa more effective and efficient. It achieves the balance of resources, capabilities, and activities that reinforce progress made by one of the instruments of national power while enabling success among the others.[2] For example, the synchronization and integration of plans, objectives, and goals within governmental, nongovernmental and military institutions facilitate a seamless and complementary environment necessary for a whole of government approach.

However, US efforts aimed at strengthening state and regional capabilities and inhibiting the spread of extremist ideology in West Africa have fallen short.[3] An indicator is the lack of a comprehensive, integrated strategy that identifies program goals and objectives, defines agreed-on agency roles and responsibilities, and identifies resources needed to achieve the objectives.[4] Therefore, while individual agencies have been successful in their programs at the lower levels, the US is not achieving its broader strategic goals for the region.

Moreover, America's budget crisis at home is forcing the first significant cuts in overseas aid in nearly two decades; a retrenchment that officials and advocates say reflects the country's diminishing ability to influence the world.[5] The forthcoming budget cuts may have an impact on the United States Government's (USG) ability to fund programs at their current levels in West Africa. "Cuts of this magnitude will be devastating to our national security, will render us unable to respond to unanticipated disasters and will damage our leadership around the world,"[6] Mrs. Clinton said in a letter to Representative Harold Rogers, Republican of Kentucky and chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

However, if the US uses a fiscally coordinated, integrated and balanced approach to drive implementation and execution of programs in West Africa then any pending budget cuts will have minimal impact on the leading West African countries who receive US aid.

This Strategic Research Project (SRP) will express the necessity of a workable whole of government approach in West Africa that integrates and coordinates development assistance initiatives, security concerns, and humanitarian relief efforts. It will show that attaining national security objectives requires the efficient and effective use of the diplomatic, informational, economic, and military instruments of national power supported by and coordinated with those of its allies and West African regional organizations.[7]

Why Engagement with West Africa is Crucial

The 2010 National Security Strategy states: "It would be destructive to both American national security and global security if the United States used the emergence of new challenges and the shortcomings of the international system as a reason to walk

away from it."[8] The same is true for those nations and regions where the United States has increased their engagement, but where the effects are only starting to appear. Engagement with West African nations has been on the rise even before President Obama wrote this document. For example, Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans-Sahara was making measured progress in helping build security capacity among several West African nations. In fact, while the author served as the Deputy Operations Officer (Deputy J-3) for the Special Operations Command Africa the command worked hand-in hand in assisting the US country team in Cote d'Ivoire during a military coup. Upon the request from the Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire, the command deployed a small five man element called the Africa Command's Survey and Assessment Team (ASAT) to Cote d'Ivoire. The team collaborated with the country team to coordinate plans and contingency options for the evacuation of US personnel out of Cote d'Ivoire. Deployment and successful integration of the ASAT within the country team demonstrated a whole of government approach that would not have been possible without the establishment of long standing relationships through years of persistent engagements. The continuous engagement between US military elements and country teams posted in West Africa makes it possible to do crisis response like this where and when needed.

Regional Security Challenges and Threats

By pursuing an integrated whole of government approach that balances the government's diplomatic, development, and defense capabilities, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and its interagency partners endeavor to limit safe haven for established transnational terrorism and the emergence of homegrown African extremists.[9] One such group is the Algeria-based al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[10]

3

The geography of Northern Mali contributes greatly to its security issues. The size of the Sahel and Maghreb regions, the ungoverned space, lack of security, and lack of development for years has been the crossroads for illicit activities involving trafficking of humans, drugs, weapons and cigarettes. AQIM have stated their allegiance to the goals and tactics of al-Qa'ida. Following its formal alliance with al-Qa'ida, AQIM expanded its aims and declared its intention to attack Western targets.[11] Beginning in 2006 AQIM conducted several improvised explosive device (IED) attacks against convoys of foreign nationals working in the energy sector.[12] Most recently in February 2008 AQIM attacked the Israeli Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania, with small arms.[13] The International Crisis Group who has monitored this situation states that AQIM receives "some degree of acquiescence from the local population, but it also requires money. This comes from both the hostage ransom they received and from AQIM links to smuggling."[14]

Wherever there's money to be made in an area that lacks security and development criminal elements will fill the void. Cigarette smuggling is the most lucrative illegal activity in this region. The logistical planning involved in cigarette smuggling is impressive. If this level of planning was applied to food distribution, mining of minerals and water irrigation many of the problems to include famine, poverty, security and development would be reduced. In early 2010, the average retail price of a pack of cigarettes in the United States was approximately $4.80 (including federal, state, and municipal excise taxes).[15] In comparison, a pack of Marlboro cigarettes (the main brand in the Trans-Saharan trade) sells for 250 CFA francs in Burkina Faso which is about fifty US cents (.50 cents); 650 in Mali which is roughly one dollar and thirty

cents ($1.30) and about seventy cents (.70 cents) in Senegal."[16] The final destination

for these illegal cigarettes is Europe, and despite the "cuts" added onto the price by the

many middlemen involved, they still sell for a price of a $1.50 - $2.00 less than the cost

of legally-imported Marlboro's.[17]

Another illegal activity that highlights the need for a whole of government

approach is human trafficking.[18] Since many West African borders are not controlled or

monitored, the lines among smuggling, human trafficking and illegal immigration tend to

blur.[19] Trafficking represents a serious threat to the region's long-term development.[20]

In response, national governments with support from international and local partners

have developed a number of measures to address the problem.[21]

Religion fissures also play a major role in the instability of West Africa and

directly impacts US interest in the country. All of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism

Partnership (TSCTP) countries are predominantly Muslim with the exception of

Nigeria.[22] Of the approximately 150 million Nigerians roughly 50 percent are Muslim, 40

percent Christian and 10 percent indigenous religions.[23]

Although, religion has not been the root cause of violence between Muslims and

Christians in Nigeria it has been used to sow dissent and violence among the two

religious groups. The group called Boko Haram which is a Muslim based Nigeria

terrorist group seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a

regime based on Islamic law.[24] Furthermore, in 2010 the group leader threatened to

attack Western influences in Nigeria.[25] This threat places a considerable amount of

caution on many of the Western countries when it comes to fully investing in long term

development projects in Nigeria.

Experts often cite political, economic, and social conditions such as political alienation, social injustice, and poverty as creating conditions that foster terrorism and the presence of violent extremist organizations in the region.[26] When governments fail to address the social conditions that fuel the ideologies of terrorists' those who are easily influenced turn to violence.

Therefore, a whole of government approach has to address those factors that fuel the terrorists or deter those who can be easily influenced. This is primarily a diplomacy and development line of effort that gets at the very heart of the problem. Although, security is a part of the equation it is geared predominantly to local security instituted through good governance and enforced through local law enforcement agencies. The promotion of freedom, democracy and economic prosperity is required in order to minimize the conditions that terrorist seek to take advantage of. This has to be accomplished through partnerships and cooperation between the US and partner nations.[27] Although, not currently the case and despite having the largest budget and the most personnel, the DoD should not be the lead on any economic programs.

Whole of Government Integration Challenges

AFRICOM's attempt to achieve a whole of government approach that favors conflict prevention over war fighting, and its counterterrorism (CT) methodology is hampered by the lack of an integration and collaboration across the different agencies. In his 2011 posture statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee General Carter F. Ham stated: That the commands integrated approach at its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany begins with the Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities who is a senior US diplomat. Additionally, a Senior Development Advisor from the USAID is a part of the staff and assists in ensuring that the command's military

programs and activities support and complement the USG's development programs and activities. He states that the command made progress in creating a collaborative interagency environment in US Africa Command. However, he also points out that while the command welcomes the skills and capabilities the interagency partners bring to the mission, the command is still working toward fulfilling the vision of an integrated whole-of-government approach to the challenges in Africa. He finishes by stating that the command would benefit from increased interagency support from other USG agencies and departments."[28]

DOS, USAID, and DoD have developed separate plans related to their respective activities but as mentioned earlier there's no comprehensive, integrated strategy across the agencies. A significant dispute exists between DoD and DOS regarding command and control of military personnel conducting operations in West Africa. Both DoD and DOS are in full agreement that each agency is responsible for their own personnel while conducting operations in a partner country. However, in some partner countries, state officials have disagreed about whether some DoD personnel carrying out activities should be subject to State's authority.[29] DOS leaders often cite National Security Decision Directive 38 (NSDD 38) which gives the Chief of Mission (COM) control of the size, composition, and mandate of overseas full-time mission staffing for all US Government agencies.[30] On the other hand senior military leaders argue that NSDD 38 does not apply to military personnel on temporary duty in a country. This disagreement has caused the cancellation of some TSCTP engagements by either military leaders or the ambassador. The cancellation of these engagements erodes the trust of the USG's military to military relationship with the partner country.

TSCTP: Case Study on Interagency Cooperation for Enhancing Security

In 2005, the Department of State established the TSCTP to eliminate terrorist safe havens in North and West Africa.[31] It includes the US and ten nations in Africa: Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.[32] Although, the TSCTP is focused primarily on the Pan Sahel region, seven (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Burkina Faso) of the ten countries are considered West African countries. The TSCTP is a multi-faceted, multi-year partnership aimed at defeating terrorist organizations by strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities with programs such as Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) that provide special opportunities to enhance training, foster communication and cultural exchanges between militaries.[33] One such exercise is the annual TSCTP supported FLINTLOCK exercise that focuses on regional military interoperability and crisis response.[34] FLINTLOCK enhances tactical and operational level of training by bringing TSCTP partner nation militaries together and conduct classes and training on small unit tactics, battalion staff training, information sharing and tactics, techniques and procedures.

Now in its twelfth iteration, FLINTLOCK has since its inception steadily increased in scope and participation, particularly in engendering a whole of government philosophy among partners. For example, the Trans-Sahara Security Symposium (TSS) was integrated in the 2011 edition. The TSS works to build civil-military capacity throughout West Africa in order to improve regional security and cooperation.[35] During her TSS opening ceremony remarks, US Ambassador to Senegal, Marcia Bernicat, stated: "One of the greatest lessons of this symposium for each and every one of you is

that a truly effective campaign against insecurity must involve a full range of civilian and military players in the execution of every operation."[36]

Although, there's a great deal of interagency cooperation in support of TSCTP activities and unity of effort for the programs and activities the funding levels between the agencies are not equitable. As a result the funding, training and equipping directly support security efforts. In 2012, the breakout was as follows: $9.8 million for Peace and Security, $0.8 million for Democracy, Human Rights & Governance, $2.4 million for Education and Social Services, and $0.8 million for Economic and Development.[37] Additionally, the military levers of the TSCTP have a shorter response time, and greater capabilities to get the mission done. It also often outpaces any of the other Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental agencies involved in development projects in West Africa. A 2006 Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Report stated that:

> As a result of inadequate funding for civilian programs ... US defense agencies are increasingly being granted authority and funding to fill perceived gaps. Such bleeding of civilian responsibilities overseas from civilian to military agencies risks weakening the Secretary of State's primacy in setting the agenda for US relations with foreign countries and the Secretary of Defense's focus on war fighting.[38]

While the benefits may be apparent at the program level, and while these benefits may in and of themselves warrant further engagement, the contribution of these initiatives to the achievement of strategic diplomatic, defense and development objectives is harder to measure. But since appropriations for Peace and Security were more than twice the amount for the other areas, it brought about a perception that security was much more important than development, undermining the intended effect of a whole of government approach.

A 2008 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that studied the effectiveness of the interagency cooperation and coordination within TSCTP argued that a separate but equal culture still exists among the agencies involved. This inhibited the integration of a counterterrorism strategy and planning documents are not yet fully developed across the whole of government.[39] In fact, The National Security Act of 1947 was intended to address the issue of integration and collaboration by establishing integrated policies and procedures for the departments, agencies, and functions of the government relating to the national security.[40] Unfortunately, the result has been that individual agency cultures have grown stronger — to the detriment of interagency unity.[41]

GAO stated that "the agencies have developed indicators to measure their TSCTP activities' outputs—their direct products and services—they have not developed common indicators to measure the activities' outcomes—the results of the products and services provided."[42] Establishing measures of effectiveness for combating terrorism is a difficult task. One of the reasons that it is so difficult and often inaccurate is that quantitative data is often used to measure progress but often does not take into account the qualitative aspects. For example, the amount of money spent on programs may correlate with progress but not accurately measure it.[43]

There are several different ways of measuring progress in combating terrorism that include, analyzing data on the numbers, magnitude, impact and significance of terrorist incidents, public attitudes in targeted countries or regions, and trends in incidents, attitudes, and other factors over time.[44] Because cross-agency measures of

performance are not in place across diplomacy, development, and defense aspects of the TSCTP, then success or even progress is difficult to establish.

AGOA and MCC: Economic Programs that Need More Integration

One of the programs implemented by the Clinton Administration to address the economic issue in Sub Saharan Africa is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The AGOA provides market-access for nearly all goods produced in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, in order to promote trade and economic growth.[45] The common thread with other programs like TSCTP, is AGOA lacked a balanced integrated whole of government approach. Although, this program has produced positive results it is not nested with any long term security programs and the enforcement of eligibility criteria is weak at best.[46] States who meet certain conditions established by the AGOA governing body and validated by the US are considered eligible to receive benefits. They must have established or are making continual progress toward establishing some of the following: the rule of law, efforts to combat corruption and policies to reduce poverty.[47] The Act offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. Albeit, not a perfect program it is a necessary program that will continue to assist in bridging the gap between security and development in West Africa.

Additionally, another program that addresses the problem of economic development is the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a mixed government-industry approach to foreign aid.[48] Several West African countries have received direct funding under this program. On November 13, 2006, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a five-year, $461 million compact with the Government of Mali aimed at increasing agricultural production and productivity and expanding Mali's

access to markets and trade.[49] The program has had a positive impact on people in the region as stated by a Malian mother who received assistance from the program.

> I am a mother of seven children: four girls and three boys. With the exception of my youngest daughter, who is in school, all my children help me in the field. Before receiving help from the Alatona Irrigation Project, I grew beans, millet and groundnuts on my farm. The little I earned barely allowed me to meet my family's basic needs. Thanks to the project, I now have access to five hectares of irrigated land, one hectare of which is also irrigated during the dry season. I attended agricultural training through the project, and I applied the knowledge and skills I received on my farm. Last year was our first year of production, and we were able to harvest 214 bags of rice.[50]

In July 2008, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a five-year, $480.9 million compact with the Government of Burkina Faso aimed at reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth through strategic investments in four projects.[51] The MCC has developed innovative ways to increase investment in land and rural productivity that directly addresses the social issues that foster dissent and become breeding grounds for terrorist recruiting. The MCC seeks to mitigate this through improved land tenure security and land management.[52]

These programs are indicators that the US is truly vested in the economic success of this region and demonstrates the government's economic efforts on working towards a whole of government approach. To continue the movement towards a whole of government approach in West Africa, the current administration faces some tough choices as they continue to try and balance the budget and determine what programs to fund and which ones to cut.

ECOWAS as a Case Study of Successful Integration

The President's FY 2012 request for Sub-Saharan Africa states US priorities, interests and the administration's commitment to the region. On the diplomacy front

efforts with strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law is stated as the

number one priority. The administration did not hesitate to demonstrate its commitment

for the rule of law in the West Africa by denouncing the 2010 military coup in Nigeria

and insisting that full sanctions be imposed on Niger.[53] Likewise, the administration

demonstrated its commitment to the rule of law in West Africa by lifting the sanctions

following a free democratic election in March 2011, in which Mahamadou Issoufou was

inaugurated as the new president of Niger.[54]

The President's National Security goal to accelerate sustainable development to

help the world's poorest countries is being addressed in West Africa through the

continuation of MCC, AGOA and other aid programs.[55] Finally, the administration is

addressing health care, education, conflict resolution, terrorism, drug trafficking and

human trafficking through a series of independent diplomatic, development and security

programs.[56] Integrating these into a whole of government approach in West Africa will

allow the different agencies to leverage their skills, capabilities and resources to counter

these threats. However, some agencies may be less willing or unwilling to subordinate

themselves to an interagency effort, especially if they sense that funding or programs

would therefore be at risk. Ironically, the US may have to look at the very countries in

West Africa it is assisting to figure out the best way to achieve a whole of government

approach that is effective in West Africa.

The best example of a whole of government approach that is effective in

executing programs aimed at economic stability, diplomacy and security in West Africa,

is not the US government but that of the African Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS).[57] ECOWAS is the sub regional Intergovernmental Organization

(IGO) that represents the interests of West African member states. ECOWAS was established in 1975 with the mission of bringing economic and political unity to West Africa. A restructuring of the ECOWAS institutions in conjunction with the transformation to a commission structure has increased their efficiency regarding the integration and development processes to better adapt to the international environment.[58]

Through ECOWAS, there are many programs or initiatives that are in place that effectively leverage the whole of government approach through integration, collaboration between the different government agencies. One such program is the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). The objective of EBID is to contribute towards the economic development of West Africa through the financing of ECOWAS and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) projects and programs relating to transportation, energy, poverty alleviation, environmental protection, and natural resources.[59] The goal is to create the conditions which will build an economically strong, industrialized, and prosperous West Africa.[60] While the EBID addresses the economic and development areas in West Africa, the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) addresses the security aspects.

The senior leadership of ECOWAS recognizes the link between security and economic progress. For the benefit of the individual states and the sub-region as a whole, ECOWAS has executed critical peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions with the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d' Ivoire Bissau, and Cote d' Ivoire.[61] In fact, the ECOMOG was formed as a direct result of African leaders collectively deciding that cohesion of the civilian, military and

police was a necessity in ensuring total peace. Additionally, they understood that security is one of the keys to economic development and sustainable democratic governance.[62]

On June 17, 2004 the ECOWAS defense and security committee approved the concept of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). The mission of the ESF is when directed respond to internal or external regional crises or threats to peace and security including terrorists and/or environmental threats.[63] The ECOWAS treaty directly ties the Defense lines of efforts with those of Diplomacy and Development. Additionally, the ESF formerly known as ECOMOG continues to participate in the US-sponsored African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, a "train the trainer" program and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) program.[64]

Consequently, the economic development, peace and security, and good governance objectives (the desired ends) of the US and ECOWAS are common objectives.[65] The challenge is finding means to reach the common objectives.

There are several US-sponsored development programs in place that assist West African countries with achieving their economic development objectives. Using ECOWAS as a conduit to fuse US efforts, balance US whole of government programs, and provide funding to West African countries may be the best option for the US to achieve a balanced US whole of government approach.

Partnership with China

As West Africa has risen in strategic importance to the US, it has also become increasingly important to China. Both nations have a keen interest in the continent's economic markets, minerals, and energy resources, particularly oil and natural gas.[66] With the US and China having mutual interests in West Africa there's opportunities for

each nation to leverage one another's strengths and influence in the region. As a result the US can leverage China's strengths in the areas where the US efforts fall short. China's new "going out" policy and the soft tools Beijing is employing to implement it will certainly intensify economic-, energy-, and influence-based competition with the United States.[67] The potential for the US and China to collectively bolster stability, economic growth, open markets and good governance in West Africa is readily available.[68] There are additional advantages for the United States in establishing a partnership approach with China, to include balancing its efforts by leveraging China's influence and economic presence.[69]

China's rising status as a world power provides Washington an opportunity to urge China to play a role in West Africa commensurate with that status.[70] In a January 14, 2011, speech, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged that "on international development, [the United States and China] could make a significant impact by aligning our investments and coordinating projects."[71] Mutual benefits of partnering with China and the West African countries are open access to West Africa markets based on a continued Free Trade basis. Additionally, a partnership relationship versus an adversarial relationship is in the best interest of both countries. As the world's superpower the US wields a great deal of influence around the world, but its resources are still limited. By partnering together, both nations can more efficiently satisfy their mutual interests. This partnership approach is not just limited to US, China and West Africa but must also include the European Union countries.

First and foremost, the US, China and other parties should form a formal strategic alliance and partnership to pursue a set of agreed upon goals. Additionally, it

should aim for a synergy where each partner hopes that the benefit from the alliance will be greater than those from unilateral efforts. The main objective of the alliance is to react to emerging challenges, enhance cooperation, coordination and collaboration, efficiency, information sharing and value creation. The advantages of strategic alliance include: allowing each partner to concentrate on activities that best match their capabilities; and learning from partners and developing competences that may be more widely exploited elsewhere.[72]

The United States is part of a dynamic international environment, in which different nations are exerting greater influence, and advancing its interests will require expanding spheres of cooperation around the word. Certain bilateral relationships— such as US relations with China, along with other key states such as India and Russia— will be critical to building broader cooperation on areas of mutual interest.[73]

Recommendations and Conclusion

Despite all of the programs implemented in West Africa aimed at achieving a whole of government approach, the hopes that a fully integrated and coordinated approach has not yet been realized by the different agencies. Duplication of effort and lack of understanding or acceptance over agency roles impedes unity of effort. Additionally, an overall structure for interagency program management is inefficient. The end result is a lack of synchronized planning and measures of effectiveness or measures of success.[74]

First, to improve the US agencies' ability to achieve a whole of government integrated approach in development, capabilities, economies and security in West Africa, a DOS, USAID and DoD top down review must be conducted. Recommend that the Secretary of State work through the USAID Administrator, the Secretaries of

Defense and Treasury, and the heads of any other required agency in order to develop a comprehensive strategy for West Africa. The objective is to develop a strategy that has clear goals, objectives, milestones, measures of effectiveness and required resources needed to achieve the stated goals.[75]

Second, recommend that the role of the ambassador under NSDD 38 include all US service members regardless of duty or training status while operating in a partner West African country. This will allow the ambassador and the country team to provide oversight, transparency, and set priorities for 1206 security assistance programs, aid and development programs, and any other programs that are being executed in their country. These programs can then be put together to directly support the ambassador's overall country plan.

Third, legislation that identifies roles, missions, funding and priorities among the federal agencies responsible for executing programs in West Africa is required. To achieve a whole of government approach, legislation that appropriately funds and provides manning for the State Department and USAID in proportion to that of DoD is required. Recommend, a DOS centrally managed budget for West Africa assistance programs that include security and development. This will allow for the integration of all programs that best supports the political priorities of the USG.

Additionally, and possibly the most important is engaging more closely with ECOWAS regarding activities which support mutually beneficial goals and objectives that will accelerate the building of trust. There are a range of initiatives that can be taken by the US government and civil society to provide development and security assistance to West Africa that do not include a US military presence. Most importantly,

any policy toward West Africa must be rooted in the principles of African self-determination and sovereignty. A unilateral, directive approach will not work. The US must implement a whole of government approach, not only among the ways, ends, and means generally, but also with respect to the political, military, and economic elements of national power employed.

To achieve its objectives in West Africa the USG must embrace and work towards a whole of government approach. In direct support of the President of the US, the US must update, balance, and integrate all of the tools of American power and work with their allies and partners to do the same.[76] The US must invest in diplomacy and development capabilities and institutions in a way that complements and reinforces their global partners.[77] The US must get this right in West Africa otherwise its efforts, interests and most importantly influence in the region will continue to decline.

<u>Endnotes</u>

[1] Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 14.

[2] Ibid.

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